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Boehnke, Jan; Koehler, Jan; Zurcher, Christoph

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ANALYSIS ARTICLE

State formation as it happens: insights from a repeated cross-sectional study in Afghanistan, 2007–2015

Jan R. Böhnke, Jan Koehler & Christoph Zürcher

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Contact: Jan Koehler, jkoehler@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Abstract

This paper contributes to an empirical understanding of state formation. Based on an original household-level data set, we provide a detailed picture of the process of state formation in Afghanistan over the last decade. State formation happens when state and society engage in reciprocal relations. Central to this relationship is an exchange of services for the acceptance of authority and increased legitimacy. Our data allows us to assess state-society relations across different dimensions. We focus on the provision of services, on the responsiveness of the state, on conflict regulation and on taxation. In result we find more evidence of state formation than expected but also see this as a contested process that unfolds unevenly and with different speed across different sectors.

Keywords: state formation; state building; international development; Afghanistan

Word count: 11.941

Introduction

Increasing the resilience of states affected by conflict and fragility is the declared goal of the international community. Yet, while there is no shortage of normative and prescriptive treatments of why and how this should be done, empirical accounts of what actually happens (or fails to happen) when state building hits the ground are remarkably rare.

This paper contributes to an empirical understanding of state formation under the specific condition of an intentional, initially foreign actors driven, state building agenda. Based on an original household-level data set, we provide a detailed picture of the process of state formation in Afghanistan over the last decade. We describe how Afghan rural society interacts with the newly emerging state in Afghanistan, and also with the international actors – military and civilian – who support the Afghan state in its military struggle against the Taliban, and in its developmental struggle for a viable state.

In terms of the statistics provided the paper is descriptive in nature: we intend to provide an empirically grounded account of complex processes of state-society interaction in a highly internationalised post-war context. The results of the descriptive statistics are analysed and interpreted based on qualitative research in the local context. Such a descriptive, empirical research narrative helps us take stock of what has been achieved in Afghanistan, and can also serve as an important prerequisite for the development of causal questions about the effects of state building interventions. The implications of this paper therefore extend

beyond Afghanistan and apply to many cases of state building and state emergence in fragile and conflict affected states.

The article proceeds as follows. We start with situating this research in the literature on state formation and state society relations, with an emphasis on recent policy approaches by international donors. Next, we briefly discuss the Afghan context. Then we introduce our original data set from surveys conducted between 2007 and 2015 and provide descriptive statistical insights on state-society relations. We end with a discussion on state formation in Afghanistan.

State building, state formation, and the social contract

Accounts of state building and state formation more generally come in a wide variety, but most converge on a common core – the social contract. From political philosophers of the enlightenment such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to the OECD-DAC in the twenty-first century, theorists and practitioners of state building have emphasised the importance of a contract between the state and its subjects, by which subjects accept the authority of the state in exchange for public goods and services as well as a guarantee of individual rights.[1]

The OECD report, 'State-Building in Situations of Fragility', puts the social contract at the heart of state building.[2] The OECD argues that social contracts emerge from the interaction between a society's expectations of the state, the capacity of the state to provide goods and services, including security, and the state's ability to generate resources from its population and territory to fund those

goods and services. Furthermore, the OECD explaines that these interactions are mediated by institutionalised political processes that bind state and society together. Importantly, legitimacy plays a key role in this interaction. Legitimacy refers to generalised trust in government based in the belief that its authority is justified. Legitimacy enables and facilitates the exchange of services for the acceptance of authority; once such an exchange has developed into repeated interactions, legitimacy will replenish itself. It is hoped that states that acquire the capacity to provide services are rewarded with increased citizen compliance, which in turn generates more legitimacy. The key to successful state building is therefore to jump-start such a virtuous circle.[3] Many international donors have subscribed to this model of state building, including the UN in Afghanistan, and consequently stress the importance of service delivery as one tool for acquiring legitimacy and authority, both of which are seen as requisites for state building.[4]

Evidently, service delivery via a rational state bureaucracy is not the only way to generate legitimacy. According to Max Weber´s seminal classification, other sources of legitimate authority are tradition and charisma.[5] Furthermore, modern political theory has emphasised the importance of procedural legitimacy. In difference to the output-induced legitimacy based on public goods and services, procedural legitimacy is based on effective and inclusive institutions solving problems and processing conflicts within societies.[6] A highly relevant and specialised case of such input legitimacy stems from democratic procedures, with elections and institutional safeguards against abuse of power as its defining characteristic.[7]

International donors are aware of these other sources of legitimacy, but given their timeframes, tool-box and sobering experience with over-ambitious liberal peace building of the post-1990's area, it is not surprising that many emphasise the importance of increasing *output* or *performance* legitimacy through increased service delivery. After all, it is quite plausible that aid has tangible impacts on perceived service delivery,[8] whereas many studies cast doubt on the assumption that aid can be effective in bringing democratic accountability.[9]

However, the nascent state and its international backers are not the only actors seeking to gain legitimacy. Many accounts of state-society relations in developing countries demonstrated that would-be state builders often face tremendous obstacles because they have to compete with societal organizations – militias, tribes, clans, religious authorities, ethnic groups, business associations and so on – for legitimacy and authority. In other words, governments looking to engage society in sustained 'contractual' relations may realise that they are not the only actors. As Migdal so convincingly showed, the state is not an autonomous actor, but rather deeply embedded in social forces.[10] Moreover, the state is not the only actor in 'doing the state', but there are numerous societal actors that cooperate and compete with the state for authority and legitimacy.[11] The reality of state-formation is that it produces various degrees of resistance, but also tolerates pockets of autonomy where societal actors exercise authority that belongs to a centralised bureaucracy, in a Weberian ideal state.[12] Emerging patterns of state-formation are therefore hybrid in the sense that states operate along non-state

actors and organizations, in various constellations of cooperation, mutual avoidance, or even competition.[13]

Current empirical research on state-formation has not answered to what extent and under what conditions increased service delivery can contribute to a social contract. Additionally, it has yet to determine which other factors may contribute to reciprocal state-society relations, which patterns of state-society relations emerge as a result, and whether those patterns are 'contractual' and stable or volatile and reversible. It is highly plausible that processes of state-formation and the emergence of reciprocal state-society relations are non-linear and dependent on many contingent factors: the specific expectations of society, the nature and quality of the services, which actors are associated with the delivery of those services and the willingness of society to actually engage in contractual relations with the state. In the next section, we will argue that much of Afghanistan's modern history is that of a rural society that often chose not to engage in contractual relations with the central government, and at times opted for avoidance or even resistance when the state attempted to increase its presence in rural areas. Against this historical backdrop and using our original data, we then describe the most recent attempt at state building in Afghanistan.

A historical perspective of state formation in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is arguably one of the most challenging environments for state building. Thomas Barfield's history of Afghanistan describes how the political

structure of modern Afghanistan was characterised by a lack of involvement by the subject population, as well as by a small and closed ruling class which only had to fear competition from within the ruling elite or from outside invaders.[14] In ordinary peace times there were very few social and political ties between state and society. The Afghan state was neither capable enough to establish dominance, nor did it have a social contract in place between the rulers and ruled. In fact, during much of Afghanistan's modern history, the state had little need for a social contract with its citizens because it was a typical rentier state that financed itself by rents from foreign powers; prominently among them the British and their rivals, then the US and the Soviet Union, and most recently the coalition of Western donors.[15]

This pattern of parallel coexistence and state-society disengagement occasionally changed, argues Barfield, when invasions by foreign powers led to widespread popular resistance. In the 19th century, the Afghan state expelled the British by empowering rural tribesmen. However, the success of these militias, formed around regional or tribal affiliations, made the country even less governable in the long run because the central state was too weak to re-establish its authority over its armed subjects.

In the 20th century Afghan elites tried repeatedly to establish central authority over the patchwork of regions, tribes and ethnic groups, and twice this led to an uprising and a civil war. Amir Abdur Rahman's aggressive push to extend state-control from its base in Kabul almost to the borders of modern Afghanistan was met with violent resistance in parts of the country.[16] This

resistance was crushed with devastating effects for some minorities.[17] Abdur Rahman´s successor, King Amanullah, pursued a more inclusive and less repressive attempt at centralisation, modelled on Atta Turks reforms in Turkey, but was also eventually met with resistance from conservative forces in rural Afghan society and forced to abandon the throne in 1929.[18] A new attempt at centralisation and forced modernisation was made by the Afghan communist party with the help of the Soviet Union after a coup d'état in 1978. Again, this led to a massive violent mobilisation of society. When the Soviet military intervention ended in 1989, the country was in the hands of competing armed groups, with no institutional foundations for rebuilding the state.

The most recent attempt at creating a modern, centralised state that would have the capability to penetrate society was launched in 2002 after the ousting of the Taliban. The international community installed Hamid Karzai as leader of the new Afghan regime. In 2004, a new constitution was adopted that created – on paper – one of the most centralised states in today's world, with a dominant president who could appoint provincial and district governors, police commanders, and many other officials without much consultation. Once the formal trappings of statehood were in place, the international community began very generously to bankroll Afghanistan's attempts at state building. Between 2002 and 2012, international donors have allocated a staggering of 47.2 billion USD in official development assistance.[19]

Despite this financial effort and despite the formal concentration of executive power in the hands of 'the palace' (the presidential administration), the

reach of the Afghan state remained very limited. The 'palace' had neither the capabilities nor the will to engage with society in a violent and oppressive way. It is also unlikely that the international backers would have supported an overly forceful strategy. At least on paper, state building in Afghanistan had to conform to standards of good governance, democratic participation and local ownership. Given its internal weakness and external constraints, the new regime had to rely on a pragmatic and accommodating strategy that employed bargaining and co-optation in order to establish a neo-patrimonial system. As Mukhopadhyay observes, the political centre in Kabul was 'operating largely in the neo-patrimonial image, and, much like many of its predecessors, forging links to the countryside through partnerships with power holders who could sometimes expand the scope of the state by engaging it'.[20] The resources of the international community most certainly helped maintain the networks of patronage that are still at the core of governance in Afghanistan.[21]

How to witness state formation as it happens?

Using household-level data, this paper intends to provide an empirically rich description of how state-formation evolves. State-formation happens when state and society engage in reciprocal relations. Central to this relationship is an exchange of services for the acceptance of authority and increased legitimacy. In order to witness state-formation as it happens, we thus need an empirical strategy to gauge the extent of state-society engagement.

Evidently, the areas where such engagement takes place will very much depend on the context. In many developing states, state-society engagement is minimal; society may be too poor to be a relevant source of tax income, or it may be too paralyzed to pose a credible threat to the elites, hence no effort is made to provide services. Nevertheless, even under such extreme circumstances there will be some form of mutual engagement between political elites and the population. No state can uphold the image of the state without at least some engagement with its citizens.[22] The international expectations and norms which demand that states provide at least some services to their population are too dominant to ignore. Under all but rarest of circumstances will the population expect anything less than some baseline level of services from the state, mainly security and the provision of basic public goods. The main objective of the massive international engagement in Afghanistan is precisely to enable the state to provide these services.

Our rich data allows us to empirically assess state-society relations across eight dimensions. These dimensions are all important aspects of state-society relations. Together, they allow us to empirically grasp the contours of the social contract.

The philosophers of the enlightenment, the international community, and most certainly the Afghans themselves agree that basic security is a crucially important service that the state is expected to facilitate.[23] We therefore assess the contributions of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and for the sake of comparison, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to security.

We then investigate perceptions of police performance, since policing is arguably another crucial domain of the state. We use a performance-based measure by asking whether the police contributed to better security.

We ask about the provision of basic services. Specifically, we ask whether the Afghan government contributed to better roads and bridges, better access to clean drinking water, better elementary schooling, improvements in the agricultural sectors, and increased availability of electricity. Most developing states allocate a large part of their budgets to these sectors because of the important contribution to the livelihoods of the rural population which can be attained. To compare, we investigate to what extent international actors were seen to contribute to these sectors. For both, measures of security and contributions to sectors, we think it is important to differentiate between the potentially different influence of state-attributed vs. foreign organisation-attributed actions on state emergence.

Next, we measure the responsiveness of the sub-national administration. We asked respondents to assess if the district administration (wolliswoli) and provincial administration take care of the needs of the village community. This question directly refers to performance legitimacy, which as we have argued, is the preferred source of legitimacy of international donors.

Another important public good which states are expected to provide are reliable institutions for managing conflicts. Hence we inquire to what extent state institutions (as opposed to other societal actors) manage local conflicts. We focus

on conflicts about natural resources, because this type of conflict and its fallouts frequently affect rural Afghan communities.[24]

Finally, we look into taxation. We explore whether respondents pay taxes to the government, which would be a sign of an emerging social contract, or to competing societal actors. Table 1 gives an overview of these dimensions and shows how we measure them.

Table 1. Empirical dimensions of state-society relations.

Data

We use original data that was collected through five surveys in spring 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015.[25] Interviews were conducted in 80 villages with a total of 2000 respondents (heads of household) per wave.[26] Response rates were very high in all five waves (90% or higher). The communities involved are located in four districts of North East Afghanistan, within the provinces of Kunduz and Takhar: Imam Sahib, Aliabad, Warsaj and Taloqan. Half of the communities were selected by random sampling. The remaining 50 per cent were selected according to their diversity on five criteria: (1) size; (2) remoteness; (3) estimated natural resource base (access to irrigated or rain-fed land, access to pastures, access to forest); (4) estimated vulnerability to natural disasters; and (5) ethnic and religious composition. Within the communities, we randomly selected a representative sample of households for every wave.[27] Our sample is designed to reveal micro-level dynamics and is intended to be representative at the community level. The

survey consisted of 66 questions addressing respondents' perceptions of: the performance of the government, international development agencies, military actors, as well as threats and security.

Pitfalls of survey-based research, and some remedies

Our evidence stems predominantly from household surveys, which report perceptions of respondents. This naturally raises the question of validity, as answers might be systematically biased. However, we are solely interested in describing the extent to which a social contract has emerged. As we have seen, the notion of a social contract centres on societal expectations and how these are met by the state. Perception-based measures are therefore adequate, even if they may not reflect the real amount of services provided.

The challenge from systematic bias of respondent's answers becomes relevant as soon as we seek to identify the causal mechanisms leading to a social contract. For example, respondents may, for various reasons, under- or over-report the actual amount of services received. Respondents may rate the state's performance based on its efforts rather than on its real achievements, which would lead to a more positive assessment than the actual service delivery warrants. In a quantitative study across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, Sacks finds evidence for such a mechanism.[28] Or, respondents may rate the state's performance based on unrealistically high expectations which will likely be disappointed, leading to a more negative assessment than the actual service delivery warrants. It is also possible that respondents rate the state's performance based on worldview and

ideological inclinations, which may be unrelated to service delivery. In such a case, more and better services will not result in more legitimacy.

In short, respondents' answers to survey questions might be biased by cognitive frames. Triangulating perceptional survey data with other independent data can help to identify such systematic biases. When presenting our results, we therefore complement the survey data with insights from qualitative data, primarily from over 200 semi-structured interviews conducted in the same research districts of Afghanistan.[29]

The changing conditions for state-formation in Afghanistan[30]

When interpreting the data, it is important to be aware that the five survey waves were conducted in different contexts. The first wave, in 2007, was primarily characterised by a stable security situation. The international military forces – mainly German in our target region – used military restraint and the emphasis was on dialogue and reconstruction efforts. Insurgent activity was very limited. Moreover, the presence of international forces was sufficient to deter the many local informal armed groups. Afghans enjoyed a time of considerable stability and security. Accordingly, the 2007 survey showed that respondents felt safe, and that they positively assessed the contribution of foreign military forces to security in the region.

In 2009 when we ran the second survey wave this context had fundamentally changed. Insurgent activity had substantially increased. Local Afghan commanders, with US support, started to set up militia groups to counter

insurgent activity. While full scale fighting had not escalated at the time of the survey, it was clearly anticipated by our interlocutors in the target region. The anxiety with regard to a military escalation of insurgency and counter insurgency measures led to a steep increase in fear levels as well as a significant drop in the positive security effect attributed to foreign forces.[31]

The third survey, in spring 2011, was conducted during the US-led surge of foreign force presence, and was the worst period of local security of all four waves. Intense fighting between insurgents on the one hand, and ISAF, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and mostly still informal militias (locally referred to as arbakee) on the other hand was frequent in 2011.[32] Respondents in 2011 continued to feel very threatened and the perceptions of ISAF's effects on security dropped to an all-time low.

When the fourth survey wave was carried out in spring 2013, the security situation had improved considerably, and the transition to Afghan security responsibility was well on the way. Accordingly, our data shows a more positive assessment of security and lower threat levels compared to 2011.

When the final survey wave of spring 2015 was implemented, the ISAF had just been assigned to history, most international combat forces had left Afghanistan and the remaining contingent operated under a training and equipping mandate (Resolute Support). At the time of the survey security was deteriorating again, the insurgents had recaptured sub-districts they controlled before the surge in 2011 and even managed to widen their reach. The security situation was, however, very different for different provinces (compare the trend for Kunduz and

Takhar below). The ANSF had not fallen apart as some observers predicted and did confront the Taliban threat. At the same time the Afghan unity government, after nearly a year of political infighting and resulting limbo, had been formed and preparations for peace negotiations with main Taliban groups were ongoing.

Figure 1 shows the development of security incidents in our target provinces.[33]

Figure 1. Security incidents in Kunduz and Takhar.

The same trend is also reflected in respondents' assessment of security in their villages. When respondents were asked '*Has security increased or decreased over the past two years in your village?'* we noted the following trends. In 2007, 98.6% said that village security had 'somewhat improved' or 'very much improved' compared to the previous two years. Cleary, respondents in 2007 compared the situation with the war years and the subsequent warlord governance, which explains these very high numbers. In 2009, still 77.0% of respondents thought that village security had 'somewhat improved' or 'very much improved.' In 2011, reflecting the dynamic of insurgent and counterinsurgent violence, this number dramatically dropped to 17.5%, but climbed again to 58.6% by 2013 only to drop again to 35.0% in 2015.

Descriptive evidence of state-formation

Provision of security: ANA, ISAF, and the Afghan Police

> '*Probably no important changes will our district have after the Foreigner troop's withdrawal by 2014 and the government opponents will also be satisfied after foreigner troop's withdrawal; the national police and national army are able to take security in the country and there will be no problems*.'[34]

> '*After the withdrawal of international forces; the government of Afghanistan is not able to provide security; because the government is weak and they won't be able to pay the expenses of army and police.*'[35]

Providing security to its population is arguably the most fundamental task that states have to fulfil. No state can hope to earn legitimacy as long as citizens think that the state is not capable or unwilling to protect its citizens. This is even more accentuated in countries emerging from war.

Our data show how Afghans assess the contribution to security of three important actors: The Afghan National Army (ANA), the ANP (Afghan National Police), and ISAF (see Figure 2).

With regard to the ANA, we find that by 2009, 60.8% of respondents said that the ANA had positively contributed to security. By 2011, this number increased slightly to 62.9% and by 2013 to an impressive 89.5%. In 2015, against

the backdrop of ISAFs closure and withdrawal of most foreign combat forces still 77.4% of respondents assessed the security contribution of ANA positively.

Assessments of the ANP (police) are similarly positive. In 2007, 92.0% agreed with the notion that the police contributed positively to the security of the community. In 2009 this number was largely unchanged at 92.6%; in 2011, we observe a dip as the number falls to 69.8%, reflecting the deterioration of the security situation that we observe in our target region, but in 2013, the number rose again to 91.1% to drop to 78.8% in 2015.

The difference between ANA and ANP perception are likely related to two aspects: the police was more or less continuously present at district level (however only over time as a formal state body under central command) while the army was less visible since it was built from scratch and because of their organisation and function as barracked units.

The trend for ISAF is very different. Initially, respondents assessed ISAF's contribution to security as overwhelmingly positive. In 2007, 79.8% of respondents said the foreign forces had positively contributed to security. But in 2009, against the backdrop of insurgent violence and counterinsurgent measures, numbers had dropped to 60.6% and when fighting started in earnest in 2011, it had dropped to 5.6%. By 2013, the figure increased slightly to 14.3% and, with ISAF's wind down, stood at 4.7% in 2015.

Figure 2: Did the following actors have an impact on security? Positive responses.

In sum, we see that the assessment for the contribution of the ANA to security is high and even improves over time, while the equally positive assessment of the police shows a small dip in 2011 when security deteriorated. By contrast, the assessment of ISAF, which was initially very high, dropped massively in 2011 and barely recovered before the end of the mission.

These numbers strongly suggest that Afghan and Western actors are assessed quite differently: Western actors appear to take the full blame for the deteriorating security situation in 2009 – 2011, while Afghan actors are far less penalised. We see two possible reasons for the massive dip that ISAF takes in 2009 and 2011. Firstly, the cycle of insurgent and counterinsurgent violence, which increased communities' exposure to the immediate experience of war, was mainly attributed to ISAF, and not to ANA. Such an assessment is not without foundation, since US Special Forces typically played the most active part in counterinsurgency operations, even if they often included Afghan units in missions. In fact, foreign forces became a source of insecurity for most respondents. This shows up in the data as the percentage of respondents who said that they were 'very' or 'somewhat' afraid of foreign forces increased from 4.9% in 2007 to 80.2% in 2013 and stood still at 49.7% after the end of combat operations in 2015.

Secondly, we also observe during this period an ideological backlash against Western actors. When asked whether respondents agreed with the statement, 'the presence of foreign troops is threatening local customs and Islamic

values in our community', 43.5% indicated that they 'rather' or 'fully' agreed in 2007; this number increased to 86.6% in 2013 and only slightly dropped to 82.0% in 2015.

Our qualitative interviews suggest that the growing scepticism towards Western security actors not only reflects disappointment about the lack of security, but is also connected to an abstract and general discussion of (Western) foreign presence and power in a society that defines itself in moral terms via Islam and Afghan traditions. This discourse is neither an expression of specific and concrete experiences with international actors, nor an overall negative assessment of the contributions of these actors. But it reflects an increasingly important narrative that depicts the Western forces as at war with Islam. Events (or rumours about events) such as the burning of the Quran and mocking the prophet in caricatures fuelled such a narrative, and many Afghans began to feel that the military presence followed ulterior and destructive motives.

While deteriorating security seriously tainted the assessment of Western actors, the assessment of Afghan actors remained high. Quite possibly, the assessment of governmental security actors is filtered through a positive vision, reflecting expectations, hopes or pride in the tangible manifestation of a newly-emerging nation state. High ratings can thus be seen as an endorsement for the idea of the state, and as a high demand for statehood. It is this a-priori goodwill that makes governmental security services less prone to negative assessments when security objectively deteriorates. Additionally, the positive assessment of Afghan security forces, we think, also reflects objective improvements in the

effectiveness of the Afghan security forces. By 2015, the Afghan police force had grown to 160,000 and the Afghan army to 170-185,000 (the exact numbers are disputed)[36], and were widely perceived by our respondents and interview partners to have a stabilising effect.

These perception based findings may seem counter-intuitive for observers more familiar with human rights and corruption focussed reports on the Afghan Security forces based on anecdotal evidence. Our research adds an important qualification of ANA, ANP and state perceptions. While perceptions are not all positive (care of the district administration is relatively low, corruption perceptions are relatively high, both are not improving dramatically) fear of the state is low and security contribution perceptions are high. This is consistent throughout our 12 year research experience in the north-eastern provinces covered. Here, Afghans seem to like to see rather more than less of their state and consider the state not as the critical problem but still rather a requested potential solution to problems.[37]

It remains to be seen how sustainable these achievements will in the coming years, when international assistance and funding is likely to continue to decrease. As illustrated by the two quotations at the beginning of this section the views of our Afghan interview partners in the guideline interviews of 2012/13 also diverged on this issue. However, nearly twice as many references indicated optimism rather than pessimism towards the ability of Afghan security forces to provide security after the withdrawal of foreign forces (87 vs 48 of coded references).

Provisions of basic services by government and by international development actors

> '*Afghanistan [sees] development every day. […] The old government tyrannized [the] people. They didn't consult with people in governmental decisions. But now we have democracy […] in our country. People share their ideas freely without any fear. People cooperate together on developmental projects*.'[38]

The provision of basic services is another crucially important function that states are expected to fulfil and is thus an important part of the social contract between rulers and ruled.[39] Almost 30 years of war have left rural Afghanistan partly devastated and very poor. Between 2002 and 2012, international donors allocated 47.2 billion USD in official development assistance.[40] By 2004, some of these aid flows began to reach rural Afghanistan. Most aid that reached the countryside was humanitarian aid and investment in small infrastructure projects aimed at improving farmers' livelihoods. Initially, development organisations engaged directly with communities, but with the establishment of provincial and then district administration, donors started to work also with and through sub-national government bodies. At the same time, the donor-financed but state-run National Solidarity Programme succeeded in organising communities countrywide into elected Community Development Councils (CDCs) that later formed District Development Assemblies (DDAs); for the first time Afghanistan had elected

formal community representatives engaging with the state on development related issues.

Most donors in Afghanistan subscribe to the idea that development assistance should, whenever possible, not bypass the state, but contribute to strengthening the state's capacity and legitimacy vis-à-vis Afghan society. It is evident that development in rural Afghanistan is financed almost exclusively by donors. However, this does not prevent Afghans from attributing some of the progress to their own government; either because donors successfully work through the state, or because Afghan respondents see the state as the enabler for development even if it is not processed through state budgets.

We asked respondents to rate the contribution of the Afghan government in providing basic services such as drinking water, roads, schooling, agricultural production, and electricity. Two interesting observations can be made (see Table 2 for details).

First, between 2007 and 2015, the share of respondents who thought that the government and international development actors contributed to better services increased. In 2015, as compared to 2007, many more respondents thought that the government contributed to improvements across all sectors. A similar trend can be observed for development actors.

Second, back in 2007 many respondents credited development actors with progress across all sectors, but only very few thought that the government also contributed to development progress. By 2015, this had changed. The Afghan government was now as likely or more likely to be credited with progress in

access to drinking water and schooling. Sectors where progress is still mostly credited to development actors are agricultural production, roads and electricity provision.

These numbers indicate that Afghan households recognise that very significant progress has been made across many sectors, and that respondents appreciate the efforts made by international development actors and increasingly by the government. Not even the deterioration of the security situation in 2009 – 2011, which left so many traces across our data, seems to have affected this sense of progress. Equally surprising is that respondents think that the government has caught up with development actors. By 2015, progress is almost equally attributed to development actors and to the government. This does perhaps not reflect the real contribution of the Afghan state, but refers to the perception of an enabling state. However, the data clearly suggest that this perceived state has so far met the demands and expectations of the rural population with regard to the provision of basic services. This general appreciation of development induced positive change is also supported by our guideline interviews in 2012/13: most interview partners acknowledge positive changes but many worry about the sustainability of those changes if external development aid will subside.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents who fully or rather agree that government or development actors contributed to better quality / better access to services.

Responsiveness of sub-national administration

> '*Briberies and corruptions reach to a high level. Those who has a patron or supporter can reach to his\her dreams and do any things that he\she wants but those who does not have supporter must sit back.*'[41]

> '*But as we see now the state has established a good relation with villages via NSP [National Solidarity Programme] and has eliminated [the] Arbabs system and the people have [access] to the government.*'[42]

As discussed at the beginning of this paper, one of the most important aspects of state formation is whether the government is able to generate legitimacy. Without some minimal legitimacy, states are commonly seen as fragile.[43] Scholars have offered different interpretations and sources of legitimacy, but for the purpose of this paper, we use a strictly performance-oriented concept of legitimacy. Our measure is based on respondents' assessment of whether or not the sub-national administration cared for community needs (never; rarely; sometimes, frequently, always; coded from 1 to 5). Such a measure thus assesses the perceived responsiveness of the state as a service provider. We acknowledge that other measures, referring to different concepts of legitimacy, are possible. For example, many scholars have pointed to the importance of procedural legitimacy, where legitimacy is obtained when leaders are chosen by, and act upon, transparent and accepted procedures.[44] Here we focus, however, only on one core aspect of

generating legitimacy, i.e. performance legitimacy as measured by the respondents' perceptions of whether the sub-national administration cares about the needs of the population (see Figure 3).

In 2007, 68.1% of our respondents said that the sub-national administration 'rarely' or 'never' took care of the communities. In 2009 even more respondents (80.3%) said that this 'rarely' or 'never' happened. In 2011 however, the number dropped to 71.3%, and then to 58.5% in 2013 before it climbed again to 63.5% in in 2015.

Conversely, in 2007, 29.4% of respondents answered that the sub-national administration 'sometimes', 'frequently' or 'always' took care of the communities. In 2009 the number even dropped to 13.6%. In 2011, the number rose to 28.05% and in 2011 further to 41.5%, only to drop again to 36.4% in 2015.

Summing up, we see a positive trend between 2009 and 2013, stagnating thereafter. This indicates that the sub-national administration has slowly become more responsive. The starting point of this trend is clearly very low. We should, however, keep in mind that the Afghan state and especially its sub-national administration were hardly existent when the state building mission was launched in 2002. Against this backdrop, the data suggest that respondents increasingly experience sub-national administration as a responsive outpost of the state. The state, it appears, is slowly earning performance legitimacy.

Figure 3: Does the district or provincial administration care? Note: 'always' chosen by less than 0.2%.

Government-sponsored local conflict processing

> '*The commanders solved the conflicts in the Mujahidin government. The government of Taliban solved the conflict in the regime of Taliban. The elders and members of the CDC [Community Development Council] solve the conflict in the government of Mr. Karzai. If people refer to the government and the government send back to the CDC to solve it*.'[45]

Another key aspect of statehood is the ability to manage conflicts in a predictable and non-disruptive way. This is especially relevant in a country that is emerging from decades of internal war. In order to obtain a better understanding of how conflicts are dealt with in rural Afghanistan and what role state actors play, we asked respondents to indicate which institutions they would turn to if involved in a dispute over natural resources.

Many Afghan communities are involved in conflicts over natural resources such as water, irrigated land, or pastures. Not only can such conflicts affect the livelihoods of whole communities, they also often connect to political conflicts, involving different levels of political patronage.[46] We asked respondents to rank the first, second, and third institution they would turn to in order to resolve disputes about land, water, pasture or forest. Respondents were given a list of

institutions, some of which belong to the realm of societal institutions (formalised to various degrees), and others to the realm of official state-institutions. These distinctions are not always clear-cut in rural Afghanistan, but a broad distinction is possible. Institutions that fall under the 'societal' category are: traditional village and district shuras (councils); elders; jirga; khan/arbob/malik (these are different names for locally influential people who in the past used to represent local communities vis-a-vis the state); mullah; commander; NGO. Institutions that fall under the 'state-run' category are: provincial authorities; central authorities; police; the wolliswol (the district governor), qazi (a local judge). Finally, there is the in-between category of hybrid institutions, i.e. recently introduced elected development councils with an official legal status but not part of the formal state apparatus - District Development Assemblies or DDAs and Community Development Councils or CDCs.[47]

Traditionally, rural communities in Afghanistan were self-governing to a very large extent. As Thomas Barfield writes, 'historically, rural people attempted to keep their problems out of government view. They avoided both the courts and the civil authorities'.[48] However, as one of the authors of this paper discovered, even in fiercely self-governed areas of Afghanistan people do turn to the state – either for patronage, for mediation and sometimes even for procedure – when both self-help and local community institutions fail.[49] It is therefore reasonable to expect that disputes over natural resources are dealt with in the first instances by village institutions and self-help and only as a subsequent option is the state involved.

This, indeed, seems to be the case (see details in Table 3). When confronted with disputes over natural resources, respondents would typically first turn to village elders or the village shura (the village council). Over all five waves, between 68% (in 2011) and 86% (in 2009) would first turn to one of these institutions. The next two most frequently named institutions (though well behind the village elders or village shura) are the mullahs and the khan.

What is important is the marked shift from traditional to hybrid community institutions as first choice to deal with conflicts. From 2011 onwards the CDCs are gaining influence as first choices (27.9% to 46.4%), taking over from the traditional shuras and even replacing elders as most prominent first choice in 2015. This indicates a formalisation of conflict processing. A drop in informal strongmen like arbobs, khans or maliks on all three levels would further support a shift towards procedural conflict processing. However, the involvement of local strongmen is about the same in 2007 and 2015 (1^{st}-3^{rd} choice added up at 23.6% and 23.8% respectively).

State-run institutions are rarely mentioned as a first or second choice. For example only between 0.2% and 2% of respondents would turn to the wolliswol (district governor) as their first choice, and only between 3.3% (2011) and 18.2% (2009) of respondents would turn to the wolliswol as their second choice.

As expected, state-run institutions are picked with increasing frequency as a third choice. The wolliswol is the third choice for between 24.8% (in 2011) and 43.1% (in 2013) of respondents, and the provincial authorities for between 13.6% (in 2011) and 28.5% (in 2015) of respondents. The trend is mostly positive across

the years. The dent in 2011 is likely caused by the fact that in the two target districts in Kunduz the district administration was severely limited in their performance by ongoing insurgency and counter insurgency activities. The district police and judges (qazi) do hardly show at all as one of the choices across the years.[50]

These numbers suggest that local non-governmental institutions continue to dominate conflict management at the local level. It is evident that Afghans still rely to a large extent on their non-state institutions, the village council and the elders.[51] However, we notice a pronounced shift from informal community institutions and informal local strongmen towards formalised community councils and increasing state involvement further down the line. State-run institutions are rarely immediately involved in conflict management; rather, they serve as a back-up when local institutions fail.[52] Only when elders or the shura are unable to provide a solution do rural Afghans seek the involvement of the district administration. The district governor then decides how to proceed further. He may refer the case back to the shura, authorising it via official stamp to negotiate a solution. He may also refer the case to the courts. Such a system does not necessarily imply that local, informal institutions compete with the formal state institutions. Rather, local community institutions can supplement state authority under difficult conditions.[53]

However, such a hybrid system is fragile and open to being hijacked by powerful individuals. The reliance on self-regulation, which is to some extent supported by the Afghan state, also means that there are few safeguards that can

protect the rule of law from the rule of the gun. Furthermore, the self-reliance of Afghan communities is also related to a lower level of trust in state institutions. When asked 'Do you think that the following institutions resolve conflicts in a just way ('sometimes' / 'always')?' between 86% (2013) and 94% (2009) of respondents in all five survey waves answered that elders were just, and between 76% and 93% believed the shura/CDC was just, whereas the wolliswol was indicated by between 37% (2011) and 60% (2009) of respondents. The scores for district judges and police are significantly lower across the years (on average 21% for the former and 17% for the latter). The overall trend between 2007 as starting point and 2015 as endpoint is, however, positive for all three state institutions.

In sum, there is little evidence to suggest that formal state institutions have taken on a more immediate role in conflict management. Local conflict management is still predominantly a domain for local societal institutions. The government has made successful attempts to bring these institutions closer to the state by granting official status, formal election procedures and competencies to village councils, and state institutions continue to serve as a backup for when societal institutions fail to provide a solution. However, as long as state institutions are still seen as far less just and effective than local societal institutions, the self-reliance of communities will continue.

Table 3. Response to the survey question: 'If you were involved in a conflict about natural resources (water, land, pasture, forest), which are the *first, second and*

third institution you would turn to resolve the conflict?' (Percentages of all respondents)

Paying taxes

The ability to collect taxes is widely seen as one of the fundamental prerequisite for successful state building.[54] Taxes are also seen as one of the key aspects of the social contract between state and society: the state acquires the right to tax its population in exchange for the provision of basic services. Our research into state-formation in Afghanistan would not be complete without investigating taxation.

We asked respondents to indicate whether they had paid taxes in the preceding year. We differentiate between taxes paid to the state ('state taxes'), and *ushr* (a traditional Islamic tax on agricultural produce).

'State taxes' captures the Afghan income tax paid by individuals and corporations to the state. Afghanistan introduced new tax legislation in 2002 and has made significant progress in tax collection. The lion's share of taxes still stems from large corporate taxpayers, many of which are contractors for foreign donors and foreign military. As is the case in most poor countries, personal income tax hardly contributes to overall tax revenues. Afghans who earn less than $100 a month don't have to pay taxes. Given the widespread poverty among Afghan farmers, it is clear that rural Afghanistan is not a promising tax-base. It is therefore not surprising that most farmers do not pay state taxes. According to our data (see

Table 4), between 0.5% (in 2011) and 4.1% (in 2009) of respondents said they paid taxes to the state.

We then looked at how many respondents answered they paid ushr. Ushr, which literally means one-tenth, is a traditional Islamic tax on agricultural produce. Giving ten per cent of the net yield of agricultural produce is seen as a religious duty. Our data shows that between 34.1% (in 2007) and 65.8% (in 2015) said that they paid ushr.

Table 4. Did your household pay state taxes or ushr in the preceding year?

Because ushr is strictly speaking not a tax that is paid to and collected by the state, but rather a religiously mandated act of charity, it is to a certain extent up to the farmers to whom they chose to give ushr. Most Muslim farmers around the world pay their ushr locally and individually to the poor. But because ushr is a religious duty (as opposed to a secular law), its interpretation is open to debate, and powerful actors who claim to have the authority over the rightful interpretation of religion often also demand the right to collect ushr. In years past, the Taliban as well as jihadi commanders and militias, routinely taxed Afghan farmers by making reference to ushr as a religious duty. According to a UNDP report, levying ushr on opium poppy generated up to 100 million USD in tax revenues to the Taliban regime.[55]

Our data reveals to whom farmers paid ushr between 2007 and 2015 (see Figure 4). Up until 2015 a declining majority paid ushr to the poor within their

community or kin group (between 57.5% and 88.6%). However, in 2015, only 45.4% said they paid ushr directly to the poor. Instead of paying ushr directly to the needy traditionally many Afghans paid to religious organisations or representatives (madrassas, mosques). Here we observe strong shifts between 6.5% in 2011 and 33.9% in 2013. These shifts seem to correlate with ushr extracted as a 'religious' tax by the informal armed groups on both sides: the Taliban and commanders of anti-Taliban militias, both of which trend together in terms of tax extraction (14.1% vs 21.2% in 2011 and 11.3% vs 26.0% in 2015). This, of course, coincides with the Taliban offensive after 2009 and the COIN efforts thereafter. It can be assumed that those farmers who paid ushr to the Taliban or the militias did not pay voluntarily, but were forced to do so by societal actors who were powerful enough to create for themselves a tax base.[56]

Our data then points to two interesting observations: Firstly, it appears that the social contract in Afghanistan does not include taxation. Hardly any rural households paid taxes to the state. This may signal that widespread poverty makes rural taxation uninteresting for the Afghan state, or that the state simply lacks the capacity and will to effectively collect taxes in rural areas, or both.

Secondly, households pay ushr much more often than state taxes, and the share of respondents who pay ushr is increasing. In 2015, more households paid ushr than in 2007. We see two possible explanations. Either, the role of Islam is becoming more pronounced in rural society and therefore paying ushr as a religious and moral obligation has become more widespread. Or, social organizations have managed to usurp the right to collect ushr. Our data provide

some evidence for this second explanation. After 2009, Taliban and local militias increasingly succeeded in usurping a fair share of ushr tax. This level dropped again when the militias were formalised as Afghan Local Police and subordinated under state control, and when the Taliban lost much of their territorial control in 2013 only to increase again in 2015, when after the withdrawal of most international forces the Taliban reasserted their control and underfinanced militias started to generate their own revenues again.[57]

Figure 4. To whom you paid ushr.

Findings and discussion

Using household-level survey data and additional qualitative interviews as well as regular field-research in the research area accompanying the two-yearly assessments, we traced the process of state-formation in Northeast Afghanistan. Our data reveal a number of interesting trends.

To start with, we saw that the state is slowly, and starting from a very low base, building up performance legitimacy. It appears that up to 2013 respondents increasingly experience the sub-national administration as a responsive outpost of the state. The absolute numbers are still low, yet this trend was positive and indicated that the state was beginning to have an impact on the everyday life of communities. After many years of war and absence of statehood, this can probably count as progress. Nevertheless, looking at the subsequent development up to 2015 shows that the progress has been stagnating at best.

Turning to respondents' assessment of how well the state provides security, we find that Afghans assess the government's contribution surprisingly positive. The highest scores are reached in 2013, with 89.5% saying that the Afghan National Army (ANA) had contributed to improved security. By contrast, only 14.3% answered this for the international military forces. These numbers suggest that Afghans, while blaming international military forces for deteriorating security, still maintain a very positive view of their own Afghan institutions and support the take-over of security responsibilities by Afghan forces. We also saw that the performance legitimacy of the police is high. A large percentage of respondents consistently said that police had a positive impact on the security situation. This positive assessment of Afghan security institutions may, to some extent, also reflect a positive cognitive bias towards Afghan institutions, which would lead respondents to overrate the real contribution to security. Yet, these assessments also demonstrate that Afghans recognise and appreciate the efforts of police and the army in a very difficult security situation. By contrast, the negative assessment of ISAF may reflect, as discussed, not only on the failure of Western actors to provide security – in fact, Western forces became a major factor for insecurity during the counterinsurgency campaign – but also an ideological backlash against Western values and Western presence.

With regard to the provision of basic services, our data indicate that Afghan households recognise the significant progress that has been made across many sectors. Both international development actors and, increasingly, the government are widely credited with remarkable improvements.

With regard to conflict management, our data suggest that local societal institutions continue to dominate conflict regulation. Afghans continue to rely on local, non-state institutions, the village council and the elders. However, formalised hybrid village institutions have clearly grown in importance. State-institutions are only approached when the local institutions appear unable to provide solutions. To some extent, such a system is supported by the state which has contributed to formalising and capacitating village institutions. This may signal that the state has not yet established an adequately efficient judicial infrastructure to deal with local conflicts and therefore prefers not only to tolerate, but actually to encourage informal conflict management. Furthermore, our data shows that respondents think the elders and village councils are fairer and less corrupt than state institutions when it comes to conflict management. Afghan communities, it appears, have thus by and large preserved their self-reliance when it comes to the management of conflict.[58]

Not surprisingly, only very few Afghan farmers pay taxes to the state, and the state has not made a serious effort to collect the meagre taxes that farmers might be able to pay. However, many more people paid the traditional ushr tax. This religiously motivated tax is intended for the poor, yet in 2011 and 2015, when the violence between insurgents and counterinsurgents was high, more than one third of those who paid ushr paid it to the Taliban or to pro-government militias. The data then point to two interesting observations: Firstly, it appears that taxes are not part of the social contract in Afghanistan. Secondly, households pay ushr

much more often than state taxes, and a share of this is appropriated by the armed opposition and militias.

In sum, these results shed light on three important aspects of state-formation with implications that reach beyond the case of Afghanistan.

A first and rather conspicuous implication is that state-formation is a process that unfolds unevenly and with different speed across different sectors. Clearly, not all good things go together. The data reveal a high appreciation among respondents for the delivery of basic services by the Afghan government. The data suggests that slowly rising performance legitimacy is correlated with the progress that has been made in sectors such as health, education, sanitation, electrification and transport infrastructure. In fact, in earlier papers we found that performance legitimacy is causally linked to service provision, thus lending empirical support to a longstanding argument in the aid literature that sees legitimacy as a benign side-effect of increased service delivery.[59] Afghans also think that their sub-national administration is slowly becoming more responsive. Finally, respondents also appear to highly regard the contributions of the Afghan Security Services. We see similar positive assessments for international development organisation, which are also widely credited with contributing to improved service delivery. By contrast, the assessment for Western security forces deteriorated.

This recognition of the state's increasing contribution to services is in contrast to the observation that village communities still clearly prefer to manage their conflicts internally. However, more formalised and state-recognised community councils are increasing replacing more traditional and informal

institutions like elders and traditional shuras in managing local conflicts. State-run district-level institutions are only involved when local institutions fail, and are far less trusted. We also observe that the state did not make a serious effort at collecting taxes in rural Afghanistan. Farmers, while rarely paying taxes to the state, often pay the religiously motivated ushr tax. As we have seen, this tax is often misappropriated by armed opposition groups and militias whenever the state is weak.

A second important implication of our data is that appreciation of state-formation by respondents is bound to be affected by a cognitive frame. As shown, an example of this is the divergent assessment of the ANA and the international military forces. The increasing negative assessment of ISAF is, as we have argued, not only a result of the failure to provide security, but also of an ideological backlash against Western military presence. By contrast, even against the backdrop of a deteriorating security situation, the ANA was still perceived as having a positive effect on security. The ANA, just like the Afghan police, enjoyed a good-will bonus, which made it less vulnerable to negative assessment once the security situation deteriorated. Likewise, once security started to improve again in 2011, most of the credit went to Afghan forces, while ISAFs rating would only marginally benefit from an improved security situation. This dynamic, we think, is a strong argument in favour of an Afghan-led stabilization campaign.

Finally, our longitudinal data reveal that the process of state formation is fluid and very sensitive to changes in speed and direction triggered by external circumstances. A case in point is the security crisis of 2009 - 2011, which left clear

traces across all our empirical probes (with the exception of the delivery of basic services). As security deteriorated after 2009, the assessment of the legitimacy of the sub-national administration, of ISAF and of the police became more negative, and more paid taxes to the Taliban and to local militias. These observations suggest that domestic and international state-builders can rarely count on permanent gains, especially not as long as the security situation is volatile. In countries in or after conflict, respondents may adapt their beliefs relative to the rightfulness of the state´s claim for dominance and their behaviour towards the agents of that state according to the current situation and their current needs. However, we find a surprising high level of support for some state agents, most importantly the official Afghan security services. But as our research shows, international actors are clearly more prone than domestic actors to suddenly fall out of favour with the local population.

This observation lends more support to the argument that state building must be, to the extent possible, an endogenous process. As our data show, despite the daunting challenges that they are facing, Afghans and their government have made considerable progress over the last decade, perhaps more than many casual observers acknowledge. What is very clear and – in comparison to other current crises like Iraq or Syria far from trivial – is that the Afghan state is still seen rather as part of the solution than as part of the problem by most Afghans interviewed.

Notes

[1] Cf. Grävingholt et al., Disaggregating state fragility, 1281-1298.
[2] OECD, State-Building Fragility.
[3] Cf. Schmelzle, Evaluating Governance; cf. Krasner and Risse, External Actors, State-Building, 545–567.
[4] NORAD, Political Economy Analysis; DFID, Building Peaceful States; cf. Karlborg, International Quest Local Legitimacy, 349–369.
[5] Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft.
[6] Luhmann, Legitimation durch Verfahren, 261; Hirschman, Gemeinsinn liberale Gesellschaft, 293-304.
[7] Scharpf, Governing in Europe; Dubiel, Konsens oder Konflikt, 130-137; Gauchet, Tocqueville, Amerika, 123-207.
[8] We discuss the argument and evidence from Afghanistan for conditional effects of service delivery on trust in government as well as differences in the attribution of aid-induced changes between government and external actors in two other papers (De Juan et al., Conditional Effects; Böhnke et al., Impact of Development Cooperation).
[9] Zürcher et al., Costly Democracy; Barnett et al., Compromised Peacebuilding, 608–620.
[10] Migdal, State in society; Migdal, Strong societies weak states; also cf. Hagmann and Péclard, Negotiating Statehood, 539–562.
[11] Migdal and Schlichte, Dynamics of States, 1-40.
[12] Cf. Eckert, Urban Governance Emergent Forms, 29-60; Koehler and Zürcher, Staat und sein Schatten, 84-96 for the concept of selective statehood.
[13] Bliesemann De Guevara, Limits of Statebuilding, 111–128; Meagher, Strength of Weak States, 1073-1101.
[14] Barfield, Cultural and Political History.
[15] Cramer and Goodhand, Try Again, Fail Again, 885-909.
[16] Dupree, Afghanistan.
[17] Cf. Mousavi, The Hazaras of Afghanistan; Saikal, Modern Afghanistan.
[18] Rubin, The Fragmentation of Afghanistan.
[19] OECD data. Available at http://www.oecd.org/statistics/
[20] Mukhopadhyay, Warlords, Strongman Governors, 44.
[21] Suhrke, When More Is Less; Goodhand and Sedra, Bribes Or Bargains, 41–61.
[22] Cf. Migdal and Schlichte, Dynamics of States, 1-40; Scott, Seeing like a state.
[23] The concept of security that makes sense to the local population and of which the state is seen as partner is more complex than can be discussed in this paper. Our guideline and focus group interviews show a situation in which basic security is linked to the absence of war and in which local communities often view their own cooperation as necessary condition for the state to be able to increase security. A frequent statement we heard both from community representatives as

well as district administrators in remoter districts was that the people needed to "protect the police" to enable it to operate.
[24] Koehler and Zürcher, Statebuilding, Conflict and Narcotics, 62-74.
[25] The surveys were implemented by the Organization for Sustainable Development and Research (OSDR), formerly COAR (Coordination of Afghan Relief), under the in-field supervision of one of the authors.
[26] Confidence intervals around the percentages reported within one wave depend both on the number of respondents as well as on the variability in the specific question. Therefore it is difficult to provide one number. The range for 95% normal-based intervals in this study is approximately ±1.3 % up to ±2.2 %. As a general, slightly conservative rule we recommend to use ±2.0 % for simple percentages and ±2.6 % for percentages from questions with multiple categories.
[27] See Böhnke et al., Assessing the Impact of Development for more information on sampling.
[28] Sacks, Antecedents of Approval.
[29] We conducted those interviews via especially trained Afghan colleagues with three types of village representatives in all villages surveyed (traditional elite like mullahs or jihadi commanders, new elite like elected shura members and a representative of the village intelligentsia) as well as with around ten district-level representatives of the government, civil society, businesses and traditional leaders. See Koehler, The Afghan perspective on ISAF – changes and trends in North-East Afghanistan, 65-86 for security related results of these guideline interviews.
[30] For a more detailed description of those changing context conditions relating to state emergence, the foreign intervention and the insurgency see Koehler and Gosztonyi, International intervention impact, 231-250.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Koehler and Gosztonyi, International intervention impact, 231-250.
[33] Source: SFB 700 C9 integrated, cross-checked and cleaned database, including public as well as de-classified internal incident lists of international governmental and non-governmental organisations.
[34] Interview with former local commander (Hizb Islami Hakmatyar, then Taliban), influential community leader and member of the District Development Assembly of Aliabad, 16 February 2013.
[35] Interview with head of village council, Imam Sahib, 22 December 2012.
[36] Denis Fitzgerald, 'Report: Afghan National Army numbers inflated'. *UN Tribune*, 3 March 2015. Available at http://untribune.com/report-afghan-national-army-numbers-inflated/
[37] The more problematic and locally diverse perceptions of militias we discuss in a separate paper. But even in this case our findings clearly contradict simplistic views of militias only as a despised abusive force fostering insecurity. See Gosztonyi et al., Taming the Unruly, 218-224.
[38] Interview with university teacher, member of District Development Assembly and provincial Peace Council, Taluqan, 19 January 2013.
[39] OECD, Supporting State-Building Conflict.
[40] OECD data. Available at http://www.oecd.org/statistics/

[41] Interview with local Mullah, Jurm district, 25 July 2012.
[42] Interview with local Mullah, Baharak district,29 September 2012.
[43] DFID, Building Peaceful States; OECD, State's Legitimacy Fragile Situations; USAID, Fragile States Strategy.
[44] Englebert, State Legitimacy Africa; Ghani and Lockhart, Fixing failed states.
[45] Interview with a farmer, Aliabad district, 26 January 2013.
[46] Koehler, Institution-Centred Conflict Research, 86-113.
[47] Koehler et al., Mixed method impact evaluation, 61-74.
[48] Barfield, Informal Dispute Resolution, 4.
[49] Koehler, Institution-Centred Conflict Research, 86-113.
[50] Note that the district police as well as the district courts are usually approached via the district administrator who recommends or decides whom to turn to.
[51] Koehler and Gosztonyi, Sub-district governance, 39-64.
[52] Ibid; Barfield et al., Clash of Two Goods, 159-192.
[53] Koehler, Institution-Centred Conflict Research, 86-113.
[54] Tilly, Coercion, Capital and States; Ghani and Lockhart, Fixing failed states; Brautigam et al., Taxation and State-Building in Developing Countries: Capacity and Consent.
[55] UNDOC, Addiction, Crime and Insurgency.
[56] Human Rights Watch, Impunity, Militias; Goodhand and Hakimi, Counterinsurgency, local militias; authors' own interviews.
[57] Koehler and Gosztonyi, International intervention impact, 231-250.
[58] Cf. Murtazashvili, Informal Order Afghanistan.
[59] Böhnke et al., Impact of Development Cooperation; Koehler et al., Mixed method impact evaluation, 61-74; Mcloughlin, When Does Service Delivery Improve the Legitimacy of a Fragile or Conflict-Affected State?, 341–356.

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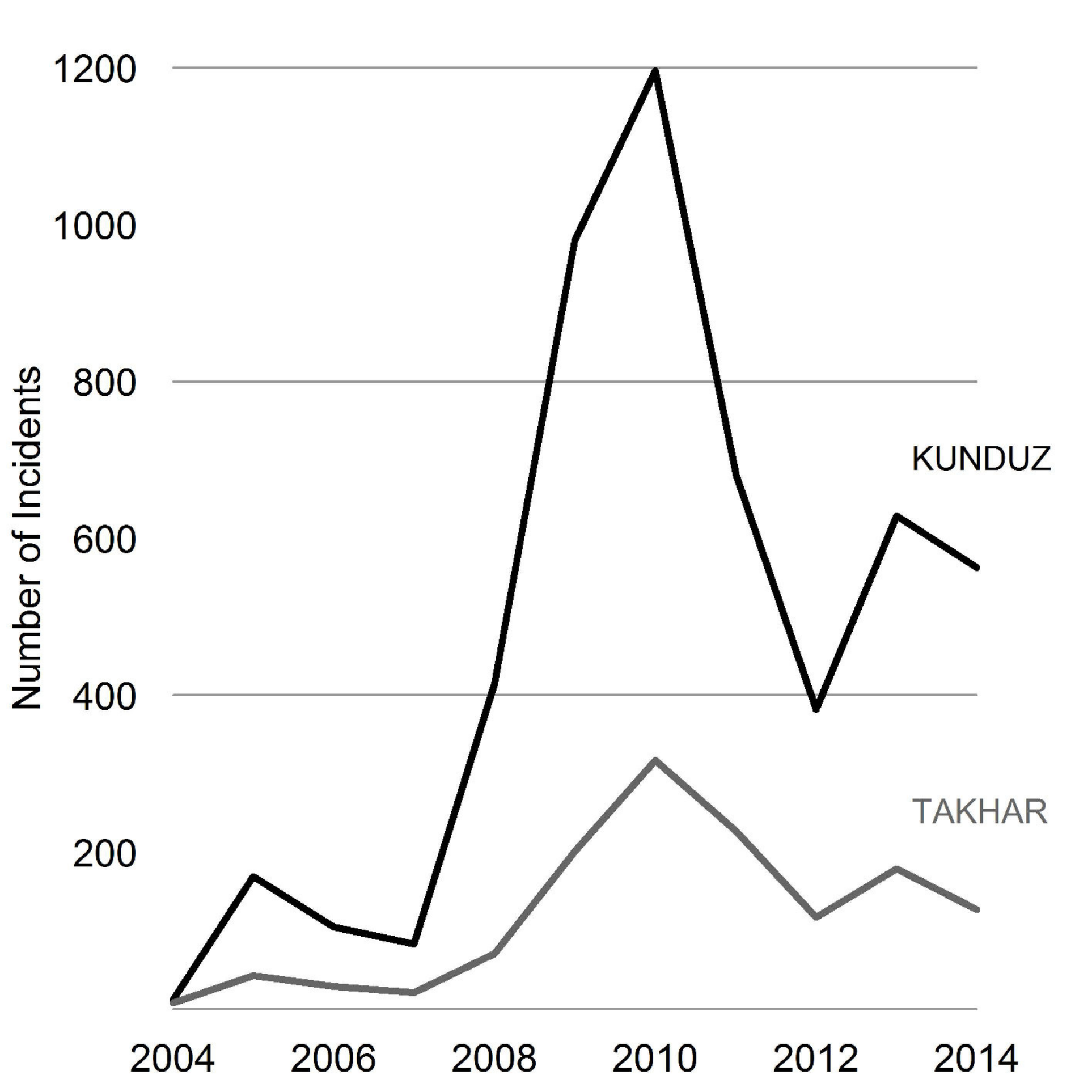
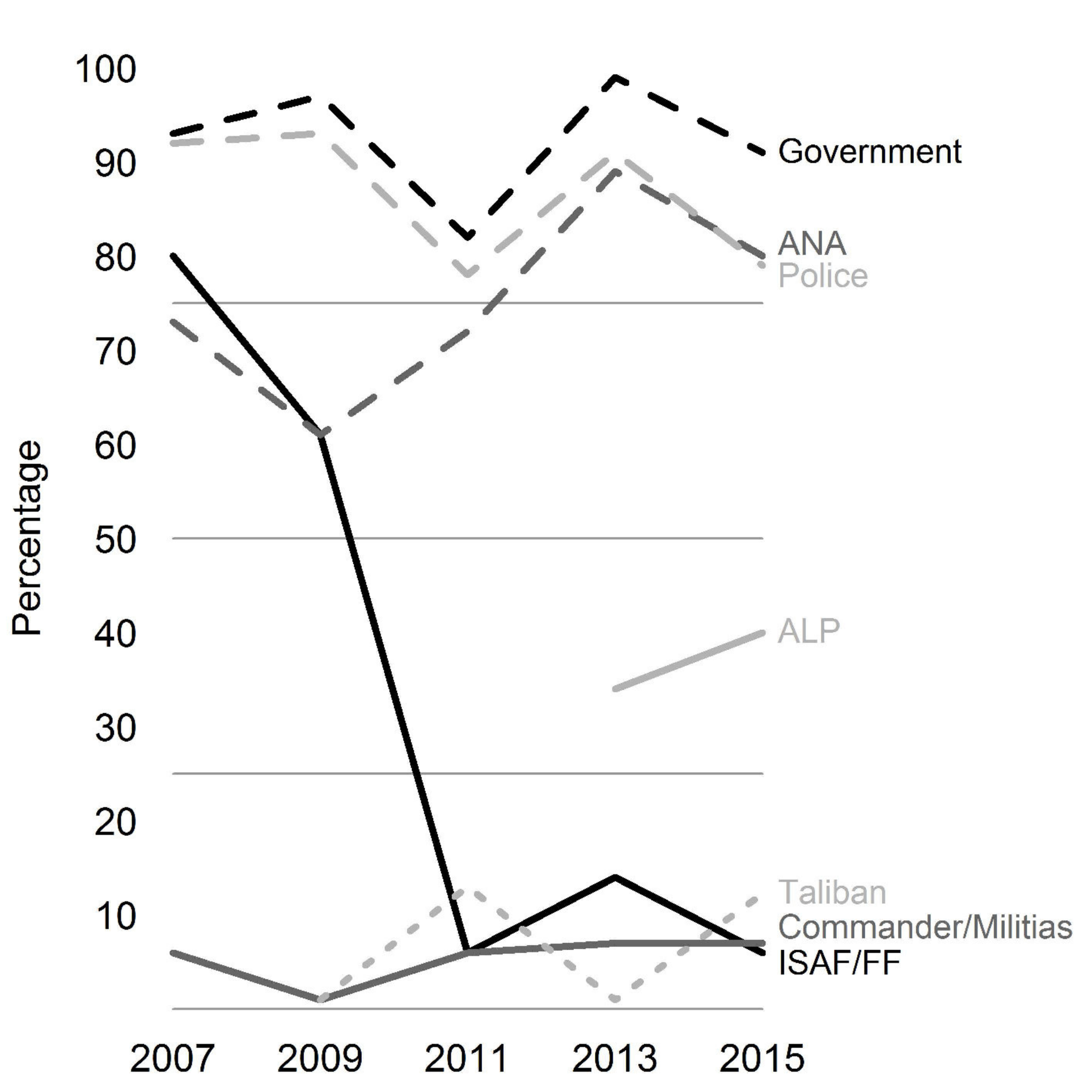
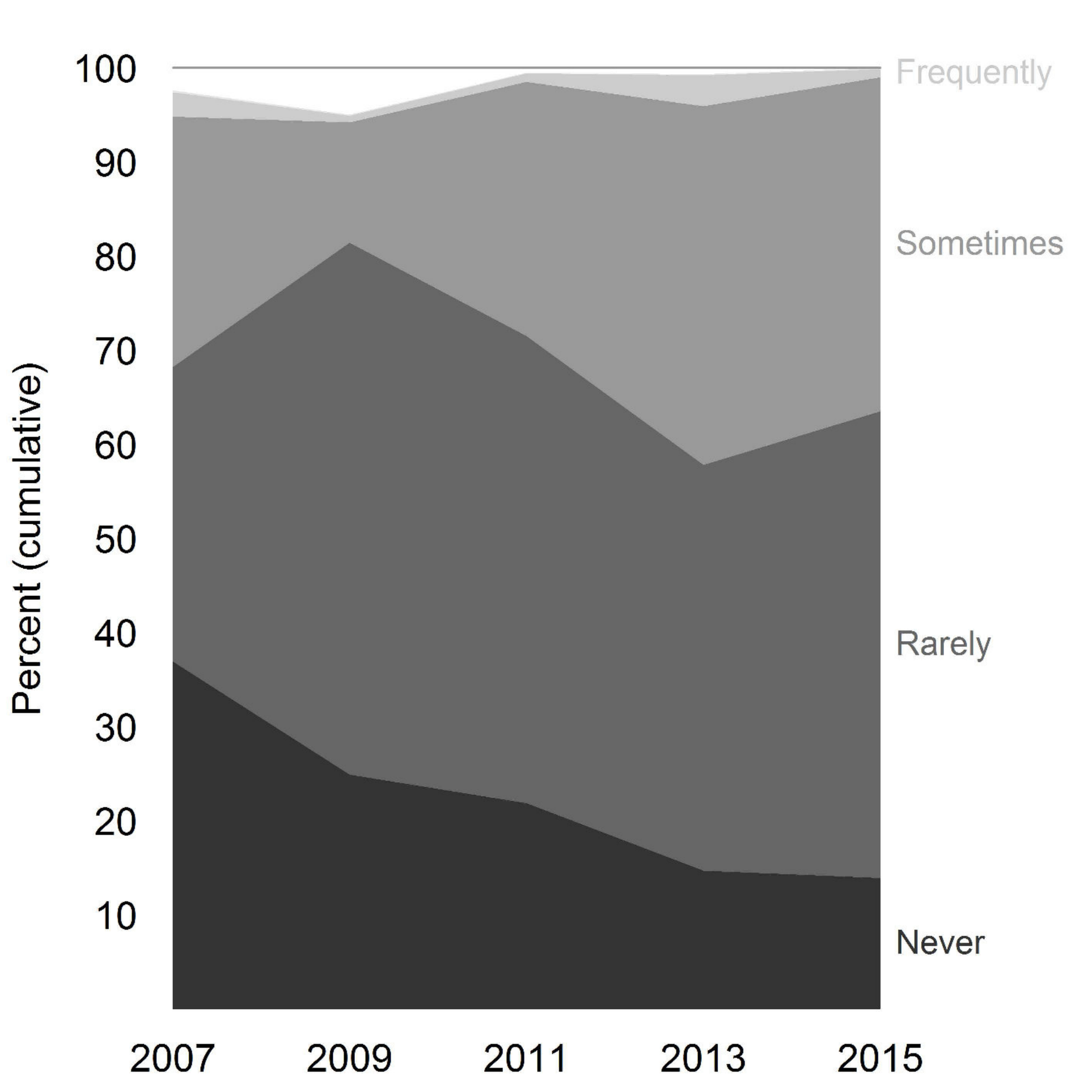
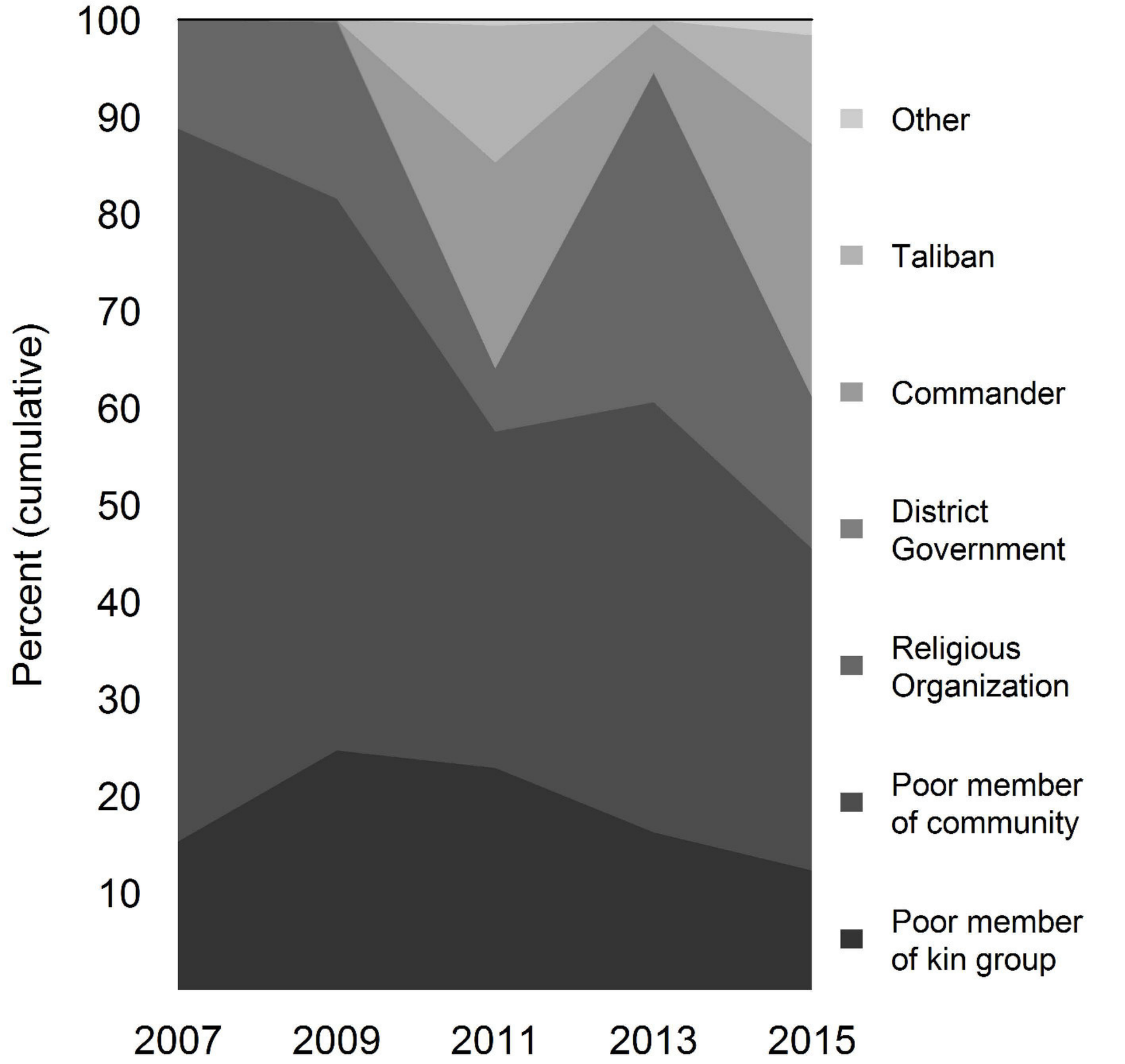

1200
1000
800
600
400
200
Number of Incidents
KUNDUZ
TAKHAR
2004
2006
2008
2010
2012
2014


100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
Percentage
2007
2009
2011
2013
2015
Government
ANA
Police
ALP
Taliban
Commander/Militias
ISAF/FF


100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
Percent (cumulative)
Frequently
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
2007
2009
2011
2013
2015


100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
Percent (cumulative)
2007
2009
2011
2013
2015
Other
Taliban
Commander
District Government
Religious Organization
Poor member of community
Poor member of kin group